

*The Tibetan Language, and Recent Dictionaries.*<sup>1</sup>—By E. H. C. WALSH,  
Esq., I.C.S.

[Read, November, 1903.]

PART I.

At the present time when matters connected with Tibet are occupying an unwonted amount of public attention, the Tibetan language is a matter of interest to more than the necessarily restricted circle of scholars, missionaries, or officials who are themselves acquainted with it. The Tibetan Dictionary, which after many years' labour has at length been completed, and has been published by the Government of Bengal, may therefore be supposed to interest that wider circle as shewing the latest that is known regarding the language of a people, with whom it is to be hoped we may be brought into closer relations of friendship and commerce in the future, than their strict exclusiveness has permitted in the past.

The present Dictionary, as is stated in the preface, was commenced in 1889, and Rai Sarat Chandra Das Bahadur was placed by Government on special duty for its compilation. He completed his work in 1899 after ten years' labour, and his proofs then underwent revision, which occupied two years, by the Rev. Graham Sandberg, and the Rev. A. W. Heyde, the former of whom brought to bear the knowledge of the scholar; and the latter not only the knowledge of the scholar, but a practical knowledge of the spoken language based on many years' labours, as a Missionary on the Western borders of Tibet. As regards Rai Sarat Chandra Das's qualifications as a compiler little need be said. His name is sufficiently well known as a Tibetan scholar, and his experiences in his second adventurous journey in Tibet in 1881-82

<sup>1</sup> A Tibetan English Dictionary with Sanskrit synonyms, by Sarat Chandra Das, Rai Bahadur, C.I.E. Revised and edited under the orders of the Government of Bengal by Graham Sandberg, B.A., and A. William Heyde, Calcutta. Published by the Bengal Secretariat Book Depôt, 1902.

have been recently published in his "Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet." <sup>1</sup>

The qualifications of the workmen are undoubted; it remains therefore to see to what extent and in what respects the present dictionary is an advance on its predecessors.

The Tibetans themselves have possessed dictionaries of their own language from very early times, from soon after the date of its first reduction to writing.

These lexicons, or lists of words, so far as any of them have been attainable, have been previously utilised by Jäschke in his Dictionary,<sup>2</sup> but they are not "dictionaries" in the accepted use of the term, as containing a complete list of the recognised words of the language, but rather lists of certain words, chiefly of Sanskrit importation, found in the early religious works, and which from the very fact of their not being generally known require explanation. Such lists are therefore of little value as regards the current language.

The earliest European Dictionary of Tibetan was compiled by the Capuchin Friars who were settled in Lhasa in the early half of the eighteenth century, two of whom, Francisco Orazio della Penna and Cassian di Macerata, sent home materials they had collected which were compiled by the Augustine Friar, Giorgi da Rimini, and published under the title of "Alphabetum Tibetanum" at Rome in 1762. The Tibetan characters for this work were drawn by Della Penna and were engraved. This also is an incomplete list of words, and many of which subsequent knowledge has shewn to be of doubtful accuracy. The next Dictionary of Tibetan was published at Serampur in 1826 at the expense of the East India Company, and Tibetan types were employed. This was edited by the Rev. John Marshman, from the notes of an unknown Italian Missionary whose manuscript came into the hands of Father Schroeter, a Missionary in Bengal, who merely transcribed the Italian into English. These manuscripts consisted of all the sentences that the unknown Italian Missionary could get transcribed by a native teacher, to which he had added extracts from the *Padma tangyig*, a series of popular legends about the Tibetan saint Padma Sambhava. The proofs had to be left unrevised as there was no Tibetan scholar to revise them. "Though richer in words than later dictionaries, the work cannot therefore be accepted as

<sup>1</sup> Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet, by Sarat Chandra Das, C.I.E. Edited by the Hon'ble Mr. Rockhill, London. John Murray, 1902.

<sup>2</sup> "A Tibetan English Dictionary, with special reference to the prevailing dialects." Prepared and published at the charge of the Secretary of State for India in Council. London, 1881.



an authority on any doubtful point.”<sup>1</sup> The next Dictionary, and the first one which answers to the modern description of a dictionary, was that of Alexander Csoma de Körös, a Hungarian Missionary,<sup>2</sup> who also published a grammar of the language at the same time. This was also published at the expense of the Indian Government. This Dictionary of Csoma de Körös is the basis on which Jäschke founded his subsequent dictionaries, and on which therefore all subsequent dictionaries may be said to have been built.

Csoma de Körös, however, adopted an alphabetical arrangement of the letters, which differed from that employed by the Tibetans themselves, and from the scientific construction of the language, and which has consequently been abandoned by Schmidt and Jäschke and subsequent writers who have followed the natural order of the letters, namely, that adopted by the Tibetans themselves. The manner in which Csoma de Körös departed from the natural order was by arranging words commencing with a prefix or superscribed letter, according to the alphabetical order of the prefix or superscribed letter. For those not acquainted with Tibetan it is necessary to explain that there are in Tibetan five prefixes

(ག་ ད་ བ་ མ་ འ་) *ga, da, ba, ma, a*, which, though written, and in spelling

treated as a separate syllable, are never pronounced, except where the word, which they commence, forms the second portion of a compound word, of which the first portion ends in a vowel, when they are sounded, by a process corresponding to the *liaison* in French, with the exception that it is the first letter of the following word that is sounded instead of the last letter of the preceding one, in the French *liaison*. As an example:

བཞི་—*Bzhi* “four,” is pronounced *shi*, and བཅུ་—*Bchu* “ten,” is pronounced

*chu* when occurring as a single word. When the two words form a compound together it is pronounced not *chu-shi* “fourteen” or *shi-chu* “forty,” but *chubshi* and *shibchu*. Similarly, there are three superscribed letters—ར་ ལ་ ས་ *r, l, and s*, which, in Central Tibetan,

are also silent except in the case of ར་ *r* and ལ་ *l*, where the word they commence forms the second factor in a compound word, when they are sounded; ར་ with its own sound of *r* and ལ་ *l*, with the sound of *n*.

Thus, in case of the two words taken for an example above, Csoma

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Terrien de Lacouperie, in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

<sup>2</sup> *Essay towards a dictionary, Tibetan and English.* Alexander Csoma de Körös, Calcutta, Baptist Mission Press, 1834.

de Körös classifies each as beginning with ཨ་ *b*, but the Tibetans, regarding the prefixes and the superscribed letters as merely adjuncts, treat these words as beginning with ཨ་ *zh* and ཨ་ *ch* respectively, which is the arrangement now universally followed.

Although Csoma de Körös had lived for years as a monk in a Tibetan Monastery in order to fit himself for his work, and must have acquired an intimate knowledge of the spoken language, his dictionary is confined to the literary language only, and founded on the Kangyur and other classical books, the language of which, as will be presently noticed, bears little resemblance to the language of the present day. The reason was that he was writing for philologists, and scholars of Buddhist writings, but it is a great pity that his undoubted knowledge of the Western Dialect, at any rate, of the modern language, has thus been lost.

The next Tibetan Dictionary was published at St. Petersburg by Professor J. J. Schmidt in 1841.<sup>1</sup> This was practically an adaptation of Csoma de Körös by translating it from English into German, though with the addition of a number of Mongolian words derived from three Mongolian Dictionaries; but in other respects it cannot be considered as much of an advance on Csoma's Dictionary except that, as already noticed, the words were arranged in their natural order. Professor Schmidt had also published a Tibetan Grammar<sup>2</sup> in 1839. In 1858, Prof. Ph. Foucaux, who had already translated several Tibetan works, the Tibetan characters of which were lithographed, published a Tibetan Grammar in Paris.<sup>3</sup> In 1881, the Rev. H. A. Jäschke's Dictionary appeared, which up to the present time has been the standard work on the Tibetan language. This work was a revised edition of a Tibetan-German Dictionary which appeared in a lithographed form between the years 1871 and 1876, and which embodied the materials which he and his colleagues in the Moravian Mission at Kyelang in British Lahoul had been engaged in collecting since 1857.

As it is, therefore, by comparison with Jäschke's Dictionary that the advance made by the Dictionary now under review must be chiefly judged, it is necessary to consider in what respect Jäschke's Dictionary was an advance on all its predecessors. In the first place it is much fuller and more copious; authorities and examples are quoted in support of the literary words; the alphabetical arrangement of the words, as

<sup>1</sup> Tibetisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch. St. Petersburg, 1841.

<sup>2</sup> Grammatik des Tibetischen Sprache.

<sup>3</sup> Grammaire Thibetaine.



already noted, is in scientific order; and most important of all, it incorporates the colloquial and business language of the present day, and also differentiates between the words and idioms in use in Central Tibet and those peculiar to, or prevalent in the Western Dialects, with which the Moravian Mission was chiefly concerned. To quote from the preface, his studies were with the object of making a translation of the Bible into Tibetan, and for this purpose to ascertain "the exact range of words in their ordinary and common usage" for which purpose he traced them through their consecutive historical applications till he "reached their last signification in their modern equivalents, as these are embodied in the provincial dialects of our own time;" and he further exemplified the usages of such words with copious illustrations and examples.

Though, as has been already said, Jäschke represents the sum total of our knowledge of the Tibetan language up to the compilation of the present Dictionary, and was the ground-work on which the compiler and revisers of the present Dictionary framed their work, there was being written at the same time another Dictionary, from an entirely independent source, which the author and revisers had not seen, and were not acquainted with. This was the Dictionary in Tibetan, Latin, and French of Father Desgodins<sup>1</sup> published at Hongkong in 1899.

This Dictionary was commenced in 1852 by M. Renou, the founder of the French Tibetan Mission, on the Chinese Frontier. When Csoma de Körös' Dictionary appeared, M. Fage, one of the Mission, united in one manuscript the words of Csoma's Dictionary, and also added the results of their own independent investigations. At the same time he altered the alphabetical arrangement of the words to that followed by the Tibetans which, as has been already alluded to, was subsequently but quite independently done by Jäschke in his Dictionary. In 1883 Father Desgodins left the Chinese Frontier of Tibet and founded the Catholic Mission at Pedong, on the borders of Sikkim, in the Kalimpong Sub-Division of Darjeeling. He then obtained a copy of Jäschke's Dictionary which had been recently published, and noted all that he found new in Jäschke on to M. Fage's Dictionary, as noted up to date by the Mission. The additional matter derived from this source is marked in the dictionary by a letter (J.), and it is interesting to note how few words or phrases bear this mark, which shews the similarity of the results obtained by two entirely independent sets of scholars, working the one at the extreme Eastern and the other at the extreme Western frontiers of Tibet.

<sup>1</sup> Dictionnaire Thibetain-Latin-Français, par les Missionnaires Catholiques du Thibet-Honkong-Imprimerie de la Société des Missions Étrangères. 1899.

Although this Dictionary was published at Hongkong in 1899, copies did not reach this country till some time later. Towards the end of 1901, I had the opportunity of comparing this Dictionary of M. Desgodins with the proofs of certain portions of the Dictionary now under review, and found that it contained a certain number of words that did not occur in the present Dictionary. I therefore suggested both to Rai Sarat Chandra Das, and to the Rev. Mr. Heyde, that it would be useful if a comparison of the two dictionaries were made, and any words found in Desgodins' Dictionary that do not occur in the present one were added as an appendix at the end, for reference; as, even if not accepted as correct, they would serve as a basis for further research and enquiry.

The compiler and reviser, however, both thought that this was not desirable. It certainly appears to be a pity that this could not have been done. Had these words been published as an appendix, stating the source from which they were taken, the compiler and revisers would have incurred no responsibility for their correctness, and those using the Dictionary would have had the opportunity of checking them by the test of usage. It is probable that so far as they are not known on this side of Tibet, they are words in use in the dialects of the Eastern provinces where, as already noted, the earlier materials for M. Fage's dictionaries were collected, and where Father Desgodins himself laboured for more than thirty years.

The consideration of this question leads to two other questions of importance, namely: (1) what authority is requisite for the acceptance of words in colloquial use; and (2) to what extent are the variations of dialect to be recognised in a Standard Tibetan Dictionary.

As regards the first of these questions it must be borne in mind that the modern and colloquial language of Tibet differs so entirely, except in the case of comparatively few words and expressions, from the classical literary language, as to constitute almost two distinct languages; and also that there is practically no Tibetan literature in the current colloquial of the day.

The authority for the meaning or usage of current words cannot therefore be based, as in other languages, on their acceptance in the writings of the country, and must be accepted on personal authority until they can be checked by other observers.

It is, in fact, the chief defect of the present Dictionary that it does not distinguish between words that are purely literary, those which while literary are at the same time also in current use, and those which are purely current and colloquial.

It is true that the author "has marked such words as he considers



archaic, or gone out of present use, with a Swastika (卐)"; but the total number of words so marked is only 188 words in large type and 65 words and expressions under small type; a total of 263 words, in the whole Dictionary of 1353 pages; so that this indication is of little value, and it is difficult to see on what ground these particular words have been selected rather than others.

It is not implied, by the above remarks, that the present Dictionary does not contain the colloquial language at all. It does so, and to a larger extent than previous dictionaries, but what is colloquial is not distinguished from what is literary.

It may be argued that in a Tibetan-English Dictionary this is not so necessary as it would be in an English-Tibetan Dictionary, inasmuch as the person who looks for any word, himself knows the source from which he has obtained it. This may be so, but at the same time, the person who hears for the first time a colloquial word spoken by a common Tibetan, if he succeeds in finding it in the Dictionary, would like to know whether it were also an accepted word in literature, and the person looking out a word found in a book would at the same time like to know whether it is a word which would be understood if he used it in ordinary conversation.

As shewing the complete divergence between the literary and spoken languages, we cannot do better than translate the following passage from M. Desgodins' preface to his Grammar of spoken Tibetan.<sup>1</sup> Speaking of the early writers who formed the literary language from the seventh century of our era onwards, he says: "They have formed for Tibet a sacred language. This language has never been understood except by those who have made a special study of it; it has not penetrated into the usage of the people, who have preserved their own dialects and their own *patois*, leaving to rare scholars, lamas, or laymen, the care of reading, understanding and explaining, if they are able, the sacred books. These scholars themselves never speak as their books are written, and if anyone were to speak this language to them, either they would not understand him, or they would say, "One writes in that way, but speaks quite differently.'"

As regards any but these rare scholars, one may confidently endorse the first alternative and say that no one else if so addressed would understand the language at all.

In considering this divergence, it will be well to give a brief outline of the growth of the Tibetan literary language from the time when

<sup>1</sup> Essai de Grammaire Thibétaine, pour la language parlée, par A. Desgodins. Hongkong. Imprimerie de Nazareth. 1899.

Thonmi Sambhota, the minister of king Srongtsan Gampo, returned to Tibet after studying the Sanskrit language at Magadha, and introduced the art of writing, in the early part of the seventh century. It must always be borne in mind that the original object of introducing the art of writing into Tibet was to propagate the Buddhist religion which had been officially adopted by that country, by the translation into Tibetan of the Buddhist writings which existed in India in Sanskrit.

Jäschke divides the period of literary activity into two parts, and we cannot do better than quote his reference to them in the Preface of his Dictionary.

“The first is the Period of Translations, which, however, might also be entitled the Classical Period, for the sanctity of the religious message conferred a corresponding reputation and tradition of excellence upon the form in which it was conveyed. This period begins in the first half of the seventh century when Thon-mi Sambhota, the minister of king Srongtsan Gampo, was sent to India to learn Sanskrit. His invention of the Tibetan alphabet gave a two-fold impulse: for several centuries the wisdom of India and the ingenuity of Tibet laboured in unison and with the greatest industry and enthusiasm at the work of translation. The tribute due to real genius must be awarded to these early pioneers of Tibetan Grammar. They had to grapple with the infinite wealth and refinement of Sanskrit, they had to save the independence of their own tongue, while they strove to subject it to the rule of scientific principles; and it is most remarkable how they managed to produce translations at once literal and faithful to the spirit of the original. The first masters had made for their later disciples a comparatively easy road, for the style and contexts of the writings with which the translators had to deal present very uniform features. When once typical patterns had been furnished it was possible for the literary manufacture to be extended by a sort of mechanical process.” “A considerable time elapsed before natives of Tibet began to indulge in compositions of their own. When they did so, the subject-matter chosen by them to operate upon, was either of a historical or of a legendary kind. In this second period the language shews much resemblance to the modern tongue, approaching most closely the present idiom of Central Tibet. We find a greater freedom in construction, a tendency to use abbreviated forms (thus the mere verbal root is often inflected in place of a complete infinitive) and a certain number of new grammatical combinations.”

This second period commenced about the year 1025 A.D., and may be said to have continued down to the end of the seventeenth century.



It contains the works of the Tibetan saints Milaraspa and Atisa and various others who followed them.

To these two periods, Sarat Chandra Das adds a third, commencing from the establishment of the Dalai Lama's Sovereignty over the whole of Tibet in the beginning of the eighteenth century. With regard to this more recent period he remarks: "Neither he (Jäschke) nor Csoma de Körös had any means or opportunities of studying either the current literature of every-day business, or the refined idiomatic literature of Tibet itself, which is quite distinct from the Indian literature that was imported into the language. They do not seem to have ever during the course of their study of Tibetan come across works on drama, fiction, correspondence, &c. It is, therefore, no wonder that the compiler of the later Dictionary should assign only two periods to the history of the literature of Tibet, entirely ignoring the third which is indeed not the least important of the three."

We do not know what books Rai Sarat Chandra Das may be referring to as "the current literature of every-day business," but think that he must have employed a term which is unintentionally misleading, as, so far as I am aware, no current books that would answer such a description exist. Rai Sarat Chandra Das brought a large number of books with him from Lhasa, a catalogue of which was published; but there is no book in that list that would answer to such a description.

As regards "correspondence," Rai Sarat Chandra Das has obtained a large amount of entirely new matter, which has been published by Government separately under the title of "Yig Kur Nam Shag"

(ཡིག་བསྐྱར་རྣམ་གཞག་), being a collection of letters, both official and pri-

vate, and illustrating the different forms of correspondence used in Tibet. The first part of this book consists of copies of the original letters, chiefly official, issued by the minister Sheda, also known as Pishipa, the minister who favoured Abbés Huc and Gabet during their visit to Lhasa in 1846. These letters are among the papers in the State offices at Lhasa, but Rai Sarat Chandra Das was able to obtain copies of them through the kindness of the two sons of another minister, Shape Phala, whose guest he had been at Lhasa. The second part consists of letter-forms, partly composed and partly compiled by the late Lama Sherab Gyatsho, Head Lama of Ghoom Monastery; and the third part is a popular complete letter writer intended for business and ordinary correspondence, a copy of which was obtained by Mr. A. W. Paul, C.I.E., Political Officer of the Sikhim expedition of 1888, among the things which the Tibetans left behind in their flight.

It must, however, be borne in mind that although a large number

of current words and new colloquial phrases have been added in the present Dictionary, this has been, so to speak, incidental; the primary object of the Dictionary and its scope being purely literary. This is clearly stated in the Preface. The Dictionary owed its inception to the recommendation of Csoma de Körös in the preface to his Dictionary, in 1834, that at a further date "the Tibetan Dictionary may be much improved, enlarged, and illustrated by the addition of Sanskrit terms." "In the year 1889," says Sarat Chandra Das, "I brought these opinions of that original investigator to the notice of Sir Alfred Croft, K.C.I.E., the then Director of Public Instruction in Bengal, and explained to him the necessity of compiling a Tibetan-English Dictionary on the lines indicated by Csoma de Körös, and particularly to assist European scholars in the thorough exploration of the vast literature of Tibet." This new matter was also based on four dictionaries of classical Tibetan which Rai Sarat Chandra Das brought with him from Tibet.

The reason for the existence of these Sanskrit terms in the old literary Tibetan, as has been already noticed, is that all the earlier Tibetan literature consists of translations from Sanskrit works on the Buddhist religion. These early books were written in a series of triplets of lines.

The centre line being generally the Sanskrit, the upper line the phonetic sound of the Sanskrit in Tibetan (a phonetic transliteration), and the bottom line the translation of the Sanskrit into Tibetan. This is the usual arrangement, though the Sanskrit is also sometimes the top line of the three. The transliterated words of the upper line are what form the "Sanskrit terms," and the interest that attaches to these Sanskrit terms in Tibetan is that the translation then given shews what was held to be the meaning in the seventh century of various philosophical terms, whose exact meaning may have since become altered or uncertain. This interest, however, is purely literary and philosophical.

In addition to these actually transliterated Sanskrit words, there are a number of Sanskrit synonyms. These Sanskrit equivalents, as is stated in the Reviser's Preface, have been taken from one celebrated Sanskrit-Tibetan Dictionary, and supplemented by Pandit Satish Chandra Acharya Vidyabhushan, who has also in numerous instances appended a literal English rendering of the Sanskrit terms.

It is difficult to estimate exactly the amount of new matter which the present Dictionary contains as compared with its predecessor Jäschke and its contemporary Desgodins.

It contains 1353 pages as compared with 608 in Jäschke's (Tibetan-English portion) and 1087 in Desgodins. Such comparison is however misleading, as owing to different size of type and spacing the amount of



printed matter on the page is different in each. Taking the average of a certain number of similar pages in each of the three dictionaries, I find that Sarat Chandra Das's contains 571 words to the page, Jäschke's 696 and Desgodins' 325 ; and correcting according to this standard, Jäschke's 608 pages are equivalent to 743 of the present Dictionary, while Desgodin's 1087 pages are only equivalent to 618, and Jäschke's 608 pages contains more printed matter than Desgodin's 1087. Even thus, however, this comparison by bulk would be somewhat misleading owing to the fact that Desgodins' Dictionary is written in Latin as well as French ; so that for every word or example given there is first the Latin equivalent and then the French, which would reduce the matter by one-third if the dictionary were only bi-lingual as in the case of the other two. But, against this, on the other hand, must be set the fact that in Desgodins' the Tibetan words and examples are only printed in the Tibetan character, while in Sarat Chandra Das's besides being printed in the Tibetan character they are followed by their transliteration in the English character, which takes up a corresponding space.

For a similar reason the comparison by bulk between the present Dictionary and Jäschke's would be misleading, as in Jäschke's only the original word is printed in the Tibetan character, all phrases and examples given under it being given in their transliteration only ; so that the real difference in the matter between Jäschke's and the present Dictionary is not nearly so great as a comparison by bulk would appear to imply. However, putting aside the exact amount, there is no doubt that the present Dictionary contains a vast amount of new matter. It remains to see of what it consists.

Here I would remark that it is a great pity that new words not to be found in Jäschke have not been distinguished by any mark, which could very easily have been done, and would have involved no extra labour at the time of compilation.

The extra matter therefore consists of—

(1) a large number of new literary words, and authorities, and examples of their use, compiled by Rai Sarat Chandra Das.

(2) a collection of Sanskrit equivalents to the literary words made by Dr. A. Schiefner. These are marked by an asterisk.

(3) Sanskrit Synonyms added by Pandit Satis Chandra Acharya Vidyabhushan.

(4) a large number of fresh authorities for previously existing literary words and examples of their use.

(5) a number of current words collected by Rai Sarat Chandra Das, with examples of their use.

(6) a certain number of additional current words added by the Revisers. With regard to these last two, it is a still greater pity that they were not marked by some distinguishing sign.

(7) Philosophical explanations of Buddhistic religious terms.

(8) Information of what may be termed an Encyclopedic character.

It is perhaps under this last head that the chief amount of additional matter may be said to fall.

To take a couple of concrete examples of common words. Under དུས་ *dus*, "time," in Jäschke's we find four columns equivalent to nearly five columns of the present Dictionary. In Desgodins' (including དུས་འགོར་

དུས་སྤྱིར་ and དུས་ཆོགས་ which in the other dictionaries fall under དུས་) we find nearly three columns, equivalent to less than two columns of the present Dictionary, whereas the present Dictionary gives seven-and-a-half columns. Again, take the common word རྩ་ *rta*, "a horse," in

Jäschke's we find rather more than two columns, equivalent to two-and-a-half columns of the present Dictionary; in Desgodins' four-and-three-quarter columns, equivalent to two-and-a-half columns of the present Dictionary; whereas in the present Dictionary we find nearly seven columns, which contain (*inter alia*) besides various literary references, a list of mythical medicinal properties which various parts of a horse are supposed to possess, some zoological information about the horse-ibex (རྩ་སྤྱིན་)

and where specimens of it have been found; some geographical information about the source of the River Brahmaputra (རྩ་སུམ་གྱི་ཁ་འབབ་)

"the horse-mouth river;" and the life of a Buddhist saint རྩ་དབངས་ *Rta Dbangs*. The first two are new, but the two latter occur in Jäschke but with only a brief reference.

To go more into detail, under the heading of "*Horse*" in the present Dictionary there are 80 separate words and phrases explained, besides 41 synonyms referred to. Of these synonyms 17 are for "*horse*" 8 for a mythical horse of Indra, 4 for "*rider*," 5 for "*foal*," and 7 for "*horse tail*," the name of a medicinal plant. Of these 80 words and phrases 41 occur in Jäschke, who also has 30 other words not included, 25 of which are names for the various colours of a horse; and 22 occur in Desgodins, who also has 34 other words not included in the present



Dictionary, of which 23 are names of the various colours of a horse, and also 8 synonyms for “horse” are given. I have noticed the entries under this one word in detail, because being an ordinary word it serves as a typical example of the difference between the three dictionaries. In the case of words of a Religious or Philosophical meaning the articles in the present Dictionary are in most cases not merely an explanation of the word, but short essays on the subject. As typical examples of these I would cite the words གར་ཟག་ I. *gang-zag*, “an animated being,”

ཐེག་པ་ II. *theg-pa*, “a method of doctrine,” and རྟེན་རྒྱུས་ *rten hbrei*, “inter-dependence of causes.” In the case of names of places also, besides the reference, some information with respect to them is almost invariably given.

To sum up, as a Dictionary of the literary language, no praise is too great both for the labour and research of the compiler; and for the care and sound judgment of the Revisers; and the excellence of the result obtained well rewards them for their labours. The assistance given by Pandit Satis Chandra Acharya in the Revision of the Sanskrit synonyms has already been referred to; but a notice of the present Dictionary would be incomplete without a word of praise to two other collaborators whose names may be overlooked, as they do not appear in either the Authors or Reviser's Prefaces, but whose aid is fully acknowledged in the Tibetan dedication on the Title pages—Lama Sherab Gyatsho, the late head Lama of the Ghoom Monastery, a Mongolian of great erudition in all Tibetan literature and lore; and also Rai Lama Ugyen Gyatsho Bahadur, originally a Lama of the Pemiongchi Monastery in Sikkim, and whose services were subsequently obtained when the Bhutea School in Darjeeling was founded, as its first Tibetan teacher, who was the companion of Rai Sarat Chandra Das in both his journeys in Tibet, and who also materially assisted him in the compilation of the Dictionary.

Before closing this reference to the existing dictionaries, a further tribute of appreciation and thanks is due from all students of Tibetan to M. Desgodins and the French missionaries before him, who since 1852 have been steadily labouring to accumulate, test, and revise the material which has now been published in his Dictionary, and which has brought to light a great number of words and expressions not formerly ascertained or recorded. The authority for these necessarily rests on that of the compilers, but we may accept their assurance in the Preface that no word has been admitted except after severe and repeated tests by independent persons, of its correctness and use. This Dictionary

will have a special value when the Standard Dictionary of Modern Tibetan comes to be compiled.

## PART II.

From what has been already said, it will be seen that although the present Dictionary has fulfilled what it purposed to be, namely, a complete Dictionary of Literary Tibetan, so far as our present sources of knowledge go, it does not fulfil the requirements of a Standard Dictionary of the entire language, and the Standard Dictionary of the Modern and Current Tibetan language has yet to be written. As already noted, Literary Tibetan, of which probably three-fourths of the present Dictionary consists, is not intelligible to the modern Tibetan. One might as well address the Modern Londoner in the once literary language of Norman French, or, for comparison with later Tibetan literary works, in the later but still more or less unintelligible language of Langland, Mandeville, or Chaucer.

It therefore remains to see what a Dictionary of Current and Modern Tibetan should consist of. These requirements I propose now to consider.

(1) *All purely literary words and references should be excluded.*

(2) *The words and idioms taken as the Standard Tibetan should be those of the language of Lhasa and Central Tibet, and all variants from these in other dialects should bear a distinguishing mark shewing the dialect to which they belong.*

On this point it is perhaps necessary to notice briefly the question of dialects. Even with our present knowledge of this subject, the number of different dialects prevalent in different parts of Tibet is very large, and a further acquaintance with the country would doubtless disclose many more. Desgodins who had himself many years' acquaintance both with the dialects of the Eastern Provinces, and also those of Central Tibet, as spoken by the merchants who come over the Darjeeling Frontier, has referred to this difficulty in the Preface to his Grammar of Spoken Tibetan, to which I have already referred; and I cannot do better than translate the following extract carrying, as it does, the weight of his authority. "Even if there were, as in China, a sort of Mandarin language known and spoken almost everywhere! But no; every country has its dialect or its particular patois. All that one can affirm is that the dialects of the two Eastern Provinces, Kham and Ü, have sufficient affinity between themselves; while they differ considerably from those of the Western Provinces, Tsang and Ngari. These differences are sufficiently great for an inhabitant of Tashilhunpo who arrives for the first time at Bathang or Tachienlu to be obliged to take a Tibetan



interpreter to be able to speak Tibetan with his hosts. However, after some time Easterners and Westerners end by understanding one another. If there are differences in the use of words in the turn and terminations of phrases, in the pronunciation, etc., there are also resemblances, general usages, pronunciations which resemble more or less and indicate a common origin, one same language; but it is this which practice alone can distinguish."

The language of Lhasa and Central Tibet does, however, to a great extent supply this common language, and it has been aptly termed the *lingua franca* of Eastern and Northern Central Asia.

The reason for this lies mainly in the vast central university which the three great monasteries of Sera, Depung, and Gaden, in the immediate neighbourhood of Lhasa, form for the priesthood from all parts of Tibet, and even from Mongolia, Higher Asia, and China; and to a less degree, to the great number of pilgrims that visit Lhasa from all parts of Tibet.

I have myself made certain enquiries as to the mutual intelligibility of Central Tibetan, Sharpa, Sikhim, and Bhutanese languages.<sup>1</sup> I have consulted several Tibetans about the mutual differences between them and their relative intelligibility to one another. The general opinion is that, taking Central Tibetan as the Standard, the Bhutanese is the least intelligible of these four to persons of the other languages.

A Bhutanese will understand a Tibetan better than the Tibetan will understand him, but they can make themselves mutually understood.

A Sharpa would at first hardly understand a Bhutanese at all; as in their case the variation from the Central Tibetan is in another direction.

A Bhutanese will understand a Sikhimite more easily than the Sikhimite will understand him; as the Sikhim language is spoken more slowly and distinctly, but they are mutually understood. Between the Sikhim language and Central Tibetan there is great resemblance, and they readily understand each other. The Sikhim language is spoken more slowly and the consonants are more distinctly sounded.

A comparative list of a number of Tibetan, Sharpa, and Bhutanese words have been given by Hodgson in his comparative Vocabulary of the several languages or dialects of the Eastern Sub-Himalayas.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On this subject see also pages 330-332, Census of India, 1901. Volume VI, Bengal. Part I. Report. Calcutta, Bengal Secretariat Press, 1902.

<sup>2</sup> J. A. S. B. 1844: and "The Languages, Literature, and Religion of Nepal and Tibet," by B. H. Hodgson. Trübner and Co., 1874.

I have referred to these dialects to shew that the main difference is one of pronunciation and idiom, and, as Desgodins says of the man from Tashilhunpo who arrives at Tachienlu, "After some time the Easterner and Westerner end by understanding one another."

Another reason why Central Tibetan is the best language for the foreigner to take as the colloquial standard is that the pronunciation is far more difficult than in the other dialects, owing to the large number of silent letters, which are sounded to a much greater extent in the outlying dialects; so that the foreigner who has learnt as his colloquial the central language will have less difficulty in learning from it the more easily pronounced dialects than he would by the reverse process.

Apart from the above reasons, Central Tibetan should be the standard because it is the language of Government and of official and general correspondence throughout the country.

(3) *There should be a carefully prepared comparative table giving the pronunciation of every letter and combination in each of the known dialects.*

Jäschke gives such a table in his Dictionary for certain of the dialects of Western Tibet, and also marks words and phrases peculiar to those languages in his Dictionary with a (W.), but this is for a portion only, and how different is the pronunciation in the eastern dialects will be seen from the table of pronunciation which Desgodins prefixes to his Dictionary, where many of the pronunciations given, though not specially stated, are clearly those of Eastern Tibet.

(4) *There should be a recognised standard of spelling of colloquial words, which, where the word is also found in literature, should be the literary spelling (as given in Jäschke's Dictionary).*

This condition may appear to a person not acquainted with the Tibetan language to be self-evident and unnecessary, but as a matter of fact it is not so.

In Tibetan "things are not what they seem," and the pronunciation of a word gives, within certain limits, little clue as to its spelling.

When *Skra* ("hair") is pronounced "ʈa," *D-Bus* is pronounced *ü*, *Grogs* is "do," *spyod* is "cho," and *A-Bras-Ljong* is "Denjong," and where the mountain *Kangchenjanga* ("Kinchenjunga") is spelt *Gangs-Chhen-Mzod-Lnga*; and where any one of these words as sounded could have equally well, phonetically, have been correctly spelt in a variety of different ways, it will be seen that spelling in Tibetan, especially in the central dialect, presents a difficulty to the learner such as is not met with in any other language. I will give an actual example. The word

"ready," pronounced "tandi," is spelt གྲལ་སྒྱིག་ *Gral-Sgrig* in Hen-



derson's Vocabulary<sup>3</sup>; while in Jäschke, Desgodins and in the present Dictionary this same word is spelt ཕྱལ་གྲིག *Phral-Grig*, and in either case pronounced the same. The latter is, in this case, the correct spelling.

Spelling and pronunciation are in fact the chief difficulties in learning Tibetan. As regards the former, the two or three examples already given to some extent shew this, and it is perhaps not too much to say that the spelling of almost every word has to be individually known. As regards the latter, the difficulty is the number of similarly sounded but differently spelt words with different meanings, and also the system of tones by which the tone in which a word is pronounced is according to its spelling high or low pitched. The Tibetans divide all words into two broad classes, low toned which are called ཨོ *pho* "male," and high toned which are called ཨླ *mo* "female," the one supposed to represent the deep toned voice of a man and the other the higher pitched voice of a woman; but between these two there comes another, ཨློ *ma-ning*, "medium," and there are also further modifications of these two broad classes. The right mastering of tones, a system so entirely strange to the Europeans, is essential to a knowledge of spoken Tibetan.

(5) *The present system of translation of the Tibetan alphabet must be modified.*

The present Dictionary has followed the system adopted finally at the Vienna Congress of Orientalists, for Sanskrit and allied alphabets. This system, however, has the drawback that in certain cases letters are selected to represent oriental letters which do not themselves correspond in sound with them, and hence a conventional diacritical mark is added to indicate that such letter is conventionally used to represent a particular sound; such letters are *ñ* for འ *nga*; *ña* for ག *nya*; *sha* for ཅ *zha*; *ç* for ཆ *sha*; and *ha* for ཇ *a*. Every one of these should be changed, and in each case the letter be transliterated so as to represent its actual sound. As will be seen, there is no difficulty in doing this.

One single objection is sufficient to condemn for practical purposes a system so artificial, namely, that there is no finality about it. These may

<sup>3</sup> Tibetan Manual compiled by Vincent C. Henderson. Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs. Revised by Edward Amundsen. Calcutta, Baptist Mission Press, 1903.

be the accepted symbols to-day, but the fashion may change, and in fact has done so since Jäschke wrote his Dictionary in 1881, where it will be found that five out of these six letters are represented by a different symbol, and the only symbol in which they agree, namely *ç*, has itself been since abandoned by orientalists, and *ś* substituted. The Asiatic Society of Bengal up to the present has adopted another system of transliteration for these letters, which it has only within the last few months altered to that approved by the International Oriental Congress of 1894, which is the system followed by the Royal Asiatic Society in England.

The confusion produced by this "multitude of councillors" will be best gathered from the following comparative table in which I give the transliteration I propose in the last column.

Tibetan letter.	Jäschke.	Present Dictionary.	Asiatic Society Bengal.	Royal Asiatic Society.	Proposed Transliteration.
ང	n̄	ñ	ṅ	n̄	ng
ཟ	ny	ñ	ñ	ñ	ny
ཅ	z̄	sh	ṣ	ṣ	zh
འ	ó	h̄	...	...	a
ཤ	ç	ç	ç	ś	sh
ཨ	'a	a	...	...	ā

In the above tables ࠠ and ࠡ have been left blank under the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and the Royal Asiatic Society, as no transliteration appears to be prescribed, and the transliteration followed in any case would therefore be that followed by the contributor.

Apart from the want of finality, there is also the great opportunity for error due to the omission in copying or printing of the small diacritical mark which alone distinguishes the one letter from the other.

A word further in support of the system of transliteration which I propose.



There is no possibility of ambiguity or error. The separate letters ན *n* and ག *g* never follow each other; *ng* ང can therefore never be mistaken for them. Similarly ན *n* is never followed by ཡ *y*; nor ཟ *z* by ཏ *h*; nor ལ *s* by ཏ *h*; so that *ny* for རྩ, *zh* for རྩ, and *sh* for རྩ cannot present any ambiguity or be mistaken for anything else, and they have the advantage of representing the actual sound, which the present symbols do not.

As regards རྩ *zha*, it is true that in Lhasa, as noted by Jäschke, the difference in pronunciation between it and རྩ *sha* is one of tone rather than pronunciation. But the Lhasa man, though he will himself pronounce *sha* in a low tone and not *zha*, is accustomed to hear those from other parts pronounce it *zha* and understands it. But in all the outlying dialects it has the sound of *zha*. For the western dialects Jäschke gives it as *zha*, and states that it has "the sound of *s* in *leisure*." For the Southern dialects Lewin<sup>1</sup> gives it as *zha* and says it is pronounced like "*z* in *azure*." Desgodins, for the eastern dialects also gives it this sound and, writing in French, says it is pronounced as "*ja*" which is exactly the same.

It also is distinctly *zha* in Sikhim and the neighbouring southern dialects.

With regard to using *a* for རྩ; this, again, represents its actual sound, and the only letter with which it could be confused is རྩ *ā*; and here the long mark over the latter is sufficient distinction and one that has to be employed in all other Oriental languages to distinguish a long vowel from its corresponding short one. By this do not let me be misunderstood to imply that རྩ *a* and རྩ *ā* bear to each other the relation of corresponding long and short vowels. They are separate letters and bear no such relation, but the distinguishing long mark is one well known and employed in all oriental languages, and may equally be employed here, and it represents the difference between their actual sound, which the letters *h* and *a* now used do not.

<sup>1</sup> Manual of Tibetan, by Major T. H. Lewin, F.R.C.S. Calcutta, Baptist Mission Press, 1879.

Also the use of  $\underline{h}$  for ཨ renders it liable to be confused with ཅ  $h$  with which it has no affinity in sound or otherwise.

Jäschke used a particular symbol for this letter when initial (a circle placed below the line), and when following a consonant he did not transliterate it separately at all.

(6). *There must be a Recognised System of Transcription (as distinct from Transliteration) of Tibetan names, and other words likely to be employed in English.*

From what has been already said regarding the Tibetan spelling, it is quite clear that the transliteration of a word will in most cases give no indication of its sound to a person not acquainted with the language. Who, for instance, in *Bkra-Shis-Lhun-po* (བཀྲ་ཤིས་ལུང་པོ་) would recognise the well known City of “Tashilhunpo,” or in *Bka-Blon-Sprung* (བཀའ་བློན་སྤུང་) the familiar “Kalimpong”?

It is therefore necessary to fix a standard system of transcription which shall be phonetic and represent the actual sound of the word, and at the same time be uniform. Such systems have been adopted by the Rev. Graham Sandberg in his *Handbook of Colloquial Tibetan*,<sup>1</sup> and by Rev. Edward Amundsen in his *Primer of Standard Tibetan*.<sup>2</sup> These are not, however, quite suited to the purpose of transcribing names and words that will require to be printed in newspapers, books of a general nature, as they contain certain special marks, and here also there is not uniformity. Thus the Rev. Graham Sandberg uses the comma above the line to indicate the omission of a silent consonant, while the Rev. Edward Amundsen employs this mark to indicate an aspirated letter.

All non-essential marks should be omitted. The only mark which is essential is the diaeresis (¨) in certain cases over the vowels *o* and *u*, which is a mark known to all printers and in general use and therefore presents no difficulties. It also exactly represents the pronunciation, which, in the words where it would be employed, is that known in all countries to be implied by this mark, namely, the *ö* and *ü* in German.

(7). *All Honorific words should bear a distinguishing mark, and against every common word the corresponding Honorific word should be noted, and similarly against every Honorific word, the corresponding common word.*

<sup>1</sup> *Handbook of Colloquial Tibetan*, by Graham Sandberg. Thacker Spink, Calcutta. 1894.

<sup>2</sup> *Primer of Standard Tibetan*, by Edward Amundsen. Printed at the Scandinavian Alliance Mission Press. Ghoom, Darjeeling. 1903.



It is perhaps necessary to note here that there are in Tibetan, what are practically two distinct languages running side by side, and each in current and regular use. The common, in which one addresses an inferior, and which the lower classes speak amongst themselves, and the Honorific (ཞེས་) *zhe-sa*, in which any one addresses a superior, and in which the educated classes politely address one another. It is necessary to know both these, as in speaking of himself the speaker always uses the common form. It is not that the same word is employed but has a different respectful form, such as occurs, for example, in the case of verbs in Urdu. In Tibetan an entirely different word is used, and this equally as regards nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Thus, if I say to an inferior, “you have a fine horse,” I would say ཀྱི་རྩ་ཡག་པོ་རེད་ *khyod kyi rta yag-po red*, but to a superior or politely addressing an equal ཉིད་རང་གི་ཆེན་པ་བཟང་པོ་རེད་ *nyid rang gi chhibs-pa bzang-po red*, from which it will be seen that there is not a single word the same in two sentences.

I give below one or two common words to shew how complete the difference is.

	Common.		Honorific.	
eye	མིག	<i>mig</i>	སྟུན	<i>spyun.</i>
nose	སྒྲི	<i>sna</i>	ཤངས་	<i>shangs.</i>
mouth	ཁ	<i>kha</i>	ཞལ	<i>zhal.</i>
ear	རྩྭ	<i>rna</i>	སྟན	<i>snyan.</i>
or	རྩྭ་ཆོག	<i>na-chhog</i>		
Similarly				
to see	ཕྱོང་བ་	<i>thong-wa</i>	གཟིགས་པ་	<i>gzigs-pa</i>
to smell	སྒྲོམ་པ་	<i>snom-pa</i>	ཤངས་སྒྲོམ་པ་	<i>shangs snampa</i>
to eat	ཟ་བ་	<i>za-wa</i>	བཞེས་པ་	<i>bzhes-pa.</i>
to hear	གོ་བ་	<i>go-wa</i>	གསལ་པ་	<i>gsan-pa.</i>
or	བྲོས་པ་	<i>thös-pa</i>		

From the examples given above it will be seen that, in respect of the words used, the Common and Honorific are practically two languages.

(8). *The Dictionary should also contain an English-Tibetan Vocabulary in which the Tibetan words may be written transliterated in the Roman Character with the reference against each to the page on which it is to be found in the Tibetan-English portion of the Dictionary, as in Jäschke's English-Tibetan Vocabulary.*

(9). *The Materials for such a Dictionary will be—*

(1) all colloquial and current words in Jäschke, Desgodins, and the present Dictionary.

(2) All words from recent Colloquial Primers or Grammars of the various dialects, which have not been included in the present dictionaries. Such are Henderson's Tibetan Manual; Amundsen's Primer of Standard Tibetan; Franke's Ladaki<sup>1</sup> Grammar.

(3) Printed lists in English of all the principal words in colloquial and current use, copies of which might be sent to various natives, missionaries, officials, and other local workers in Tibetan in various localities and dialects; and they might be asked to enter against each the words, if any, known to them or ascertained to be in general use.

These lists should for clearness provide two columns: one for the common, and the other for the Honorific word (where such exists).

With the above material there would be sufficient to compile a Standard Dictionary of the Colloquial and Current Language. These lists, on receipt, would be compared with the Central language which would be first compiled. Whenever the word in the dialectic lists agreed with the word in use in the Central language no separate entry would be made. Where it differed it would be entered with a letter indicating the dialect to which it belonged.

I have indicated the lines which such a Dictionary should take. Its compilation would be a very fitting object for Government to undertake. The Dictionaries of Csoma de Körös, Jäschke, and the present one of Rai Sarat Chandra Das, all owe their existence to Government aid, and it may be expected that Government will shew in the future the same enlightened and liberal spirit that it has done in the past.

With good arrangements for the collection of material, the compilation of such a Dictionary should not take much more than a year, and any cost and labour bestowed on it would be well repaid by the practical value of the results obtained.

<sup>1</sup> J.A.S.B., Volume LXX, Part I, Extra No. 2.—1901.